Leicester, Maſs.
October 17/70.

Dear friend Webb,

I must indite a few lines to you, as an avant-courier of Mrs. May, who leaves home on Thursday, proceeds to Montreal (escorted by her younger son, Ruſsell), there joins Miſs Frothingham (sister of Rev. Fredk. F.), thence further proceeds to Quebec, and on Saturday, 22d, embarks in Steamship "Austrian" for Liverpool. (!) Think of that! – of my wife setting forth, without any of her own family, to take a peep at so much of Europe as horrid War will allow, and at "the right little, tight little island" at any rate, including I trust your island also. – She must explain to you how it all came about, – and the moral impoſsibility of my going too, at this time. Of course I give her your addreſs in Middle Abbey Street, where in due time I hope she will appear, & get as good & sage counsel as I & my brother Fredk. did, seven & twenty years ago, from you as to Dublin & its environs.

And how glad she will be to see you and Deborah in your own house, and talk over Leicester hill, & other far-away American homes. Tomorrow I go to New York, having been appointed a Delegate to the Conference of "Unitarian & Other Christian Churches"; and this arrangement leaves me little or no time to be writing now. But I could not have Mrs. May cross the water towards your home, without a word of announcement from me, although Ada wrote, to tell you about it, last week. I have not taken any part in any denominational, theological, or ecclesiastical Convention, Conference, or other Gathering for many a long year. Just now, some of the Unitarian Sectarists, fearful of too much mental & spiritual liberty, want to impose upon the Unitarian Churches a — they say it isn't to be a Creed, but others say it will amount to one. They want a Confession, or Statement of Belief, to show where they stand; and will make a desperate effort for it this week. This would be, I believe, to impose a yoke upon us, "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear". The struggle will be earnest & close, the discussion keen, the effort to reconcile liberty of thought with voluntary ~~with~~ submission to other people's thoughts will be ingenious & determined. May God defend the right.

– Creeds & Confessions, at the best, are such poor, meagre, empty, fizzionless (to use a Scotch word, I believe,) & unsatisfactory things – they express so little, & that so poorly, of what a soul which has any life in it believes, & absorbs, & ~~[illegible]~~ assimilates, that the proposition, at this late day, to set up such a one, seems to me a sad fact, as well as a great mockery.

But I must stop. I hope Mr. May will find you and Deborah both well – your son Alfred also and his wife, and that your accounts from Richard are good.

And now, for the present, farewell. I am greatly obliged to you for your many remembrances of us. I have, after some delay, made known to the Librarian & Directors of the Worcester Public Library your offer of the gift of your files of the "Standard" and "Liberator," provided they will ~~[illegible]~~ undertake the charges of transportation. You shall know their answer when I receive it. The Librarian (to whom I have mentioned it) was delighted at the prospect of receiving them, and believes the Directors will be very glad to get them.

My mother, for whom you kindly inquired has been very comfortable during the past ho dry summer, which has been so trying to mo younger & sturdier persons. My son Edward continues at the Navy Yard, Charlestown, and is p much confined by his work. However he, and h brother Russell, passed yesterday with us, - it b the last Sunday, for the present, their mother will spend at home. - They are well. I ha intended to accompany my wife to Quebec & i ship, but yesterday it was arranged that I s not give up my mission to New York and th Russell should go to Quebec with his mother

And so farewell for now -
with very affec^e regard
Saml May.

Garrison has been very ill lately, - with Eczema, I understood. His son-in-law Villard has gone to Germany, with hea greatly impaired. I heard Thomas Hughes in Boston last wee He had the Music Hall packed full, & a most choice audienc

MS. B.1.6 v.11 p.5